

Message Text

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TAGS: EEC, EFIS
SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 8, 1977: INTERNAL
FISHERIES ISSUES

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 1191, (B) 76 EC BRUSSELS 12594, (C) 76 EC
BRUSSELS 12303, (D) 76 THE HAGUE 6050

1. SUMMARY: DURING THEIR FEBRUARY 8 COUNCIL MEETING, THE EC
FOREIGN MINISTERS DECIDED TO SCRUB THEIR PIECEMEAL APPROACH TO
DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERIM INTERNAL FISHERY REGIME, IN CONJUNCTION
WITH ADOPTION OF A PACKAGE OF COMMUNITY FISHERY CONSERVATION
MEASURES. THEY DECIDED, IN THE MEANTIME, TO EXTEND THEIR
AGREEMENT TO LIMIT 1977 MEMBER STATE CATCHES TO 1976 LEVELS.
ALTHOUGH THE MINISTERS DID APPOINT A HIGH-LEVEL GROUP TO
EXAMINE INTERNAL FISHERY ISSUES, THEY WERE UNABLE TO REACH A
DECISION ON A COMPLETE SET OF CONSERVATION MEASURES. THE UK
AND IRELAND HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL, THEREFORE, IMPLEMENT
THEIR OWN LIMITED NON-DISCRIMINATORY CONSERVATION MEASURES
ON A UNILATERAL BASIS. END SUMMARY.

2. INTERNAL REGIME. FRUSTRATED BY THEIR MONTHS-LONG SEARCH
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FOR AGREEMENT, THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS DECIDED FEBRUARY 8
TO DROP THEIR SEARCH FOR AN INTERIM INTERNAL FISHERY REGIME
(FEFTELS B AND C) AND CONCENTRATE INSTEAD ON DEVELOPMENT OF A
LONG-TERM INTERNAL FISHERY ISSUES. THE EXPERTS ARE TO REPORT
TO COREPER ON THEIR FINDINGS IN MARCH. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION
AT THE FEBRUARY 8 MEETING OF MEMBER STATE QUOTAS. THE
MINISTERS SIMPLY AGREED, FOR THE PRESENT TIME, TO EXTEND THEIR

DECEMBER 1976 AGREEMENT (REFTEL C) LIMITING 1977 MEMBER STATE CATCHES TO 1976 LEVELS.

3. CONSERVATION MEASURES. ALONG WITH THEIR DECISION TO SEEK A LONG-TERM INTERNAL REGIME, THE MINISTERS AGREED TO DISCUSS THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR EIGHT CONSERVATION MEASURES TO BE APPLIED ON A COMMUNITY BASIS. THESE INCLUDED:
- A. REDUCTION OF CATCHES BY OTHER MEMBER STATES IN CERTAIN SPECIFIED IRISH COASTAL WATERS, NOT TO EXCEED EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE PREVIOUS THREE-YEAR AVERAGE. PROHIBITION OF FISHING IN THESE WATERS BY VESSELS LARGER THAN THOSE WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY FISHED THERE. AGREEMENT TO EXAMINE EXTENSION OF THESE MEASURES TO OTHER IRISH COASTAL WATERS.
 - B. PROHIBITION OF FISHING IN THE EC ZONE BY VESSELS CARRYING OUT PROCESSING OPERATIONS ADDITIONAL TO FILLETING, FREEZING, REDUCING OFFAL. COMMENT: THIS MEASURE IS DESIGNED TO DIFFERENTIATE IN SUCH A WAY THAT FRG FREEZER SHIPS WOULD BE PERMITTED, WHILE EAST EUROPEAN FACTORY SHIPS WOULD BE EXCLUDED.
 - C. REQUIREMENT THAT SPECIFIC AUTHORITY BE GRANTED FOR TRANSSHIPMENT TO FACTORY SHIPS.
 - D. FURTHER EXAMINATION WITH A VIEW TO DECIDING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON PROHIBITING USE OF PURSE SEINE NETS.
 - E. IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING NEAFC REGULATIONS ON NET SIZES, SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE EXAMINATION IN ORDER TO (1) INTRODUCE PROGRESSIVELY THE USE OF LARGER NETS FOR NEPHROPS AND (2) INTRODUCE FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON CARRYING OF MORE THAN ONE SIZE OF NET ON THE SAME VOYAGE.
 - F. BAN ON HERRING FISHING IN THE NORTH SEA, SUBJECT TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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- SOME CONDITIONS, PRINCIPALLY THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS WITH SWEDEN AND NORWAY ON DANISH FISHING RIGHTS IN THE SKAGGERAK. A LIMIT ON INCIDENTAL CATCHES OF HERRING TO TEN PERCENT BY WEIGHT ON SPRAT CATCHES AND FIVE PERCENT BY WEIGHT ON POUT AND SAND EEL, WITHIN CEILINGS OF 15,000 TONS FOR DENMARK, 16,500 TONS FOR THE UK, 410 TONS FOR THE FRG AND 275 TONS FOR THE OTHER MEMBER STATES.
- G. LIMITING INCIDENTAL CATCHES OF DEMERSAL FISH DURING INDUSTRIAL FISHING TO TWENTY PERCENT BY WEIGHT AND TEN PERCENT OF UNDERWEIGHT PROTECTED SPECIES, WITH FURTHER REDUCTIONS TO REACH ACCEPTABLE LEVELS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
 - H. A BAN UNTIL MARCH 31, 1977, AND FROM AUGUST 1 TO MARCH 31 EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER ON FISHING FOR NORWEGIAN POUT IN A "BOX" OFF THE NORTHEASTERN UK.

4. ACCORDING TO PERMDEL SOURCES, THE IRISH IMMEDIATELY BLOCKED AGREEMENT ON THE FIRST POINT, FISHING IN IRISH COASTAL WATERS, INSISTING THAT THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS WERE INADEQUATE. THE SOURCES REPORT THAT THE MINISTERS WERE

INCLINED TO LET THE IRISH GO IT ALONE ON THIS POINT AND
PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY WITH DISCUSSION OF THE REMAINING POINTS UNTIL
POINT 8 (ON NORWEGIAN POUT) WAS BLOCKED BY THE UK, WHICH HELD
THAT THE COORDINATES PROPOSED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE BOX
IN WHICH POUT FISHING WOULD BE BANNED WERE NOT RESTRICTIVE
ENOUGH. ACCORDING TO A FRENCH PERMDEL SOURCE, THE
DANES THEN ANNOUNCED THAT, SINCE THE UK HAD BROUGHT IN A
RESERVE, THEY TOO WOULD RESERVE ON POINT 8, SINCE THEY FELT
THE COMMISSION'S NORWEGIAN POUT PROPOSALS WERE TOO RESTRICTIVE,
AND WOULD NOW RESERVE ON POINT 7 (INCIDENTAL CATCHES), AS WELL. THE
DANES THEN PUT A FURTHER RESERVE ON ALL THE MEASURES UNTIL
3:00 PM FIRDAY, FEBRUARY 11, TO ALLOW TIME FOR CONSULTING THEIR
VOLKETING COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES.

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5. AT HIS POST-COUNCIL PRESS CONFERENCE, UK FOREIGN SECRETARY
CROSLAND (THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT) ANNOUNCED THAT THE FOLLOWING
PACKAGE OF CONSERVATION MEASURES CAN BE FORMALLY APPROVED AS
AN A-POINT BY THE FEBRUARY 14-15 AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL, IF
THE DANISH RESERVES ARE DROPPED:

- A. A BAN ON USE OF PURSE SEINE NETS, SUBJECT TO FURTHER
EXAMINATION BY THE COMMISSION.
- B. RESTRICTIONS ON NET USE (AGREED IN PRINCIPLE).
THE COMMISSION IS TO SUBMIT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON THE NEAFC
RECOMMENDATIONS BY MARCH 15.
- C. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONTROL OF FACTORY
SHIP ACTIVITIES (AGREED IN PRINCIPLE). THE COMMISSION IS TO
SUBMIT REFINED RECOMMENDATIONS.
- D. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ON LIMITING CATCH

TRANSSHIPMENT.

E. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ON INCIDENTAL CATCHES (WHICH ARE STILL SUBJECT TO A SPECIFIC DANISH RESERVE).

F. FISHING FOR NORTH SEA HERRING IS TO BE BANNED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 28, 1977 AND APRIL 30, 1977, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LIMITED UNAVOIDABLE INCIDENTAL CATCHES. THE COUNCIL IS TO DECIDE LATER ON NORTH SEA HERRING FISHING DURING THE REST OF 1977 ON THE BASIS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDIES AND NEW COMMISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROPOSALS. HERRING FISHING IN THE CELTIC SEA IS TO BE BANNED BETWEEN MARCH 1 AND DECEMBER 31, 1977; AND A STUDY IS TO BE UNDERTAKEN OF THE STATE OF HERRING STOCKS IN THE IRISH SEA, AS WELL AS IN COASTAL WATERS OF NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST IRELAND.

6. IRISH AND BRITISH RESERVES. DURING THEIR OCTOBER 30, 1976, MEETING IN THE HAGUE, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREED THAT, FAILING ADOPTION OF AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY CONSERVATION MEASURES, THE MEMBER STATES COULD ADOPT, WITH COMMISSION APPROVAL, UNILATERAL NON-DISCRIMINATORY CONSERVATION MEASURES ON AN INTERIM BASIS TO ENSURE PROTECTION OF RESOURCES IN THE FISHING ZONES OFF THEIR COASTS. IN A CHALLENGE TO THIS PAST AGREEMENT, UK MINISTER OF STATE OWEN AND IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD BOTH ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE INSTITUTING UNILATERAL CONSERVATION MEASURES (THE IRISH ON COASTAL WATER FISHING AND THE UK ON NORWEGIAN POUT) AFTER ONLY INFORMING THE COMMISSION. THEY DENIED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD HAVE ANY VETO OVER THESE MEASURES. FITZGERALD SAID HE HOPED THE IRISH CONSERVATION MEASURES COULD BE IN PLACE WITHIN THE WEEK; WHILE OWEN SAID HMG WOULD INITIATE THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES FEBRUARY 9.

7. THE CURRENT MOOD. PUBLICLY, AT LEAST, PARTICIPANTS IN THE COUNCIL MEETING TOOK A POSITIVE VIEW OF THE PROCEEDINGS, PARTICULARLY THE DECISION TO SEEK A LONG-TERM INTERNAL REGIME. EC COMMISSIONER GENELACH CHARACTERIZED THE DISCUSSIONS AS HAVING RESULTED IN "CONSIDERABLY MORE PROGRESS THAN COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED" AND SAID THAT THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS AN INTERNAL REGIME AND AGREED COMMUNITY CONSERVATION MEASURES MARKED A "TREMENDOUS SUCCESS." PRIVATELY, PERMDEL SOURCES ARE LESS OPTIMISTIC, THE FRENCH, IN PARTICULAR, CRITICIZING THE UK'S DECISION AS AN UNJUSTIFIED FACE-SAVING MOVE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSUMPTION. MOST CONCERN CENTERS ON THE YET UNRESOLVED QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT IRELAND AND THE UK CAN, IN FACT, LEGALLY ESTABLISH UNILATERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSERVATION MEASURES WITHOUT COMMISSION APPROVAL. HINTON

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